

HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE MONTANA NATIONAL GUARD TECHNICIAN & AGR BULLETIN

DECEMBER NO: 00-12

SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION STAFF

SECTION II – LABOR RELATIONS SMS ROGER HAGAN

SECTION III – EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT MSG KEITH KELLY

SECTION IV – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS/SERVICES TSG ROBERT GREGORI SSG SHARON KABERLINE

SECTION V – CLASSIFICATION/STAFFING SMS WAYNE LOSING SSG EDWINA STRAINER SGT KEITH HERRIN

SECTION VI – ACTIVE GUARD RESERVE MSG GARY MORGAN SGT TIMOTHY MCCOY

*QUALITY PAYS THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
LEADERSHIP ~ ~ ~ TRUST ~ ~ ~ INTEGRITY*

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- ★ *Sailors Identified*
- ★ *Gift Giving*
- ★ *Suggestion Program*
- ★ *FEHB News*
- ★ *Waiver Policy Update*
- ★ *OPM & Retirement*
- ★ *Retirement Benefits*
- ★ *FERCCA Can Help*
- ★ *TSP Update*
- ★ *2001 NDAA*
- ★ *Frames of Choice*
- ★ *Dental Program*
- ★ *Leave & Pass*
- ★ *BAH Certification*
- ★ *Medical News*
- ★ *MILPER Messages*

SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

LTC JIM HOGAN
SMS ROGER HAGAN
MSG ANNE MARONEY

HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER	LTC HOGAN, JIM	3115
PERSONNEL ASSISTANT	SGT THURSTON, CINDY	3116
SEEM/PSM	MSG MARONEY, ANNE	3117
LABOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST	SMS HAGAN, ROGER	3118
SUPERVISORY PERS MGMT SPEC	SMS HAGAN, ROGER	3118
EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT SPEC	TSG KELLY, KEITH	3120
CLASSIFICATION SPECIALIST	SMS LOSING, WAYNE	3121
STAFFING SPECIALIST	SSG STRAINER, EDWINA	3122
AGR MANAGER	MSG MORGAN, GARY	3124
SENIOR PERS SGT	SGT McCOY, TIMOTHY	3125
PERSONNEL ASST EMPL REL	SSG KABERLINE, SHARON	3130
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS SPECIALIST	TSG GREGORI, ROBERT	3131
PERS ASSISTANT/STAFF-CLASS	SGT HERRIN, KEITH	3133
FAX		3135

Congratulations !

Big Congratulations to our new Colonel to be! LTC (P) Hogan will soon join the 0-6 ranks.

Congratulations from your Staff!!!

A BIG THANK YOU!

We would like to thank SSG Helen Bennett for her help in the Human Resources Office. SSG Bennett has been helping TSG Gregori and SSG Kaberline in the Employee Services branch. She contributed greatly to projects and we enjoyed having her with us.

Thanks!

HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

18,000 AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL WAR SAILORS IDENTIFIED

N E W S R E L E A S E

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(PUBLIC AFFAIRS)
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

=====

Approximately 18,000 African American sailors who served in the Civil War have been identified and will be commemorated in a ceremony at the U.S. Navy Memorial, 701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C., at 1 p.m. EST on Friday, Nov. 17, 2000.

Vice Adm. Edward Moore Jr., the Navy's senior African American flag officer, currently serving as commander, Naval Surface Force Pacific, and National Park Service (NPS) Director Robert Stanton, will join Dr. William Dudley, director of the Naval Historical Center, to mark the formal announcement Friday.

This is nearly twice the number of African American sailors researchers expected to find when their search began. Authorities originally assumed that about 10,000 had participated in the Civil War, but the Naval Historical Center, in conjunction with a Howard University study and the National Park Service, documented an additional 8,000 African American participants.

Over the course of the Civil War, 18,000 African American men, and more than a dozen African American women, served in the U.S. Navy, about 15 percent of the total enlisted force. These sailors served on almost every one of the nearly 700 Navy vessels. Eight African American sailors earned the Medal of Honor for their heroism in battle.

A team of researchers from Howard University's Department of History, headed by Joseph P. Reidy, professor of history and associate dean of the Graduate School, examined hundreds of thousands of pages of naval records housed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., for evidence about African American sailors. Advised by a committee of experts in Civil War naval history from the Naval Historical Center, the NPS, the National Archives and the Smithsonian Institution, the researchers systematically pieced together the history of the African American sailors in the Civil War Navy.

The database was compiled from surviving personnel records, rendezvous reports and ship's muster rolls, and then compared with the Navy's Index to Service Histories prepared by the Navy Department during the World War II era. The research continues today as the partners examine pension files in order to supplement this list of names with

a more complete record of information about the experience of the naval enlistees and their families throughout the Civil War era.

The sailors' names and military history will be incorporated into the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System Database (CWSS). Personal information, naval service and muster records included in the database are accessible through the Internet at <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>. CWSS is the product of a partnership formed among the Navy, the NPS, and Howard University in 1993.

The CWSS is a cooperative effort by the NPS and several other public and private partners, to computerize information about the Civil War into a database containing basic facts about servicemen who served on both sides during the Civil War. The goal of the CWSS is to increase the American people's understanding of this decisive era in American history by making this information widely accessible. The CWSS will enable the public to make a personal link between themselves and history.

For more information contact Navy Lt. Steven T. Gibson, public affairs officer, Naval Historical Center at (202) 433-0412. For more information on CWSS, visit <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>. For more information on Naval History, visit <http://www.history.navy.mil>.

The famous management consultants Tom Peters and Nancy Austin studied a number of successful companies in an attempt to discover the secret of their success. The management technique they found most common to these successful companies was something they call MBWA – Management by Walking Around. Instead of staying behind their desk in a private office, the most successful managers were constantly moving around the establishment, talking with customers, employees, and anyone else who might give them a new insight into how to make the business better.

-- "In Search of Excellence"

*We wish you Happy Holidays !!!
From the HRO Staff*

SECTION II – LABOR RELATIONS

SMS ROGER HAGAN

Useful On-line Site For Personnel Issues Reminds Us Of Our Ethical Responsibilities When Gift Giving

There are many on-line newsletters/web sites available to technicians that will help them with gathering information about their careers. We have listed many of them in past issues of this Newsletter and will continue to list more in the future. Here is an article on the Federal Ethics policy on gift giving. This is important information for us to know during this Holiday Season of gift giving. The article came from an online (e-mail) issue of FEDweek. Subscription information is available at the end of the article.

Gifts Policy Reminder

Now that the holiday season is approaching, federal employees should bear in mind the government's ethical policies regarding gift giving. Generally speaking, executive branch employees (*that's us technicians*) may not make a gift to an official superior nor can an employee accept a gift from another employee who receives less pay except in certain circumstances or on certain occasions. But on an occasional basis, including occasions when gifts are "traditionally given or exchanged," the following individual gifts to a supervisor are permitted: gifts other than cash that are valued at no more than \$10; food and refreshments shared in the office among employees; personal hospitality in the employee's home that is the same as that customarily provided to personal friends; gifts given in connection with the receipt of personal hospitality that is customary to the occasion, and transferred leave provided that it is not to an immediate superior. The rules are found in 5 Code of Federal Regulations 2635.301-304.

Other Gift-Giving Rules

In addition to the rules above that typically apply at holiday times, on certain special infrequent occasions a gift may be given that is appropriate to that occasion. These occasions include: events of personal significance such as marriage, illness or the birth or adoption of a child, or occasions that terminate the subordinate-official superior relationship such as retirement, resignation or transfer. Employees may solicit or contribute, on a strictly voluntary basis, nominal amounts for a group gift to an official superior on special infrequent occasions and occasionally for items such as food and refreshments to be shared among employees at the office.

FEDweek

Subscriptions, subscriptions@fedweek.com

Website: <http://www.fedweek.com>

SECTION IV – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS/SERVICES

TSG ROBERT GREGORI
SSG SHARON KABERLINE

SUGGESTION PROGRAM

Suggestions: IDEA Pool.

The Air Force has a program called the Idea Pool at the internet address <https://ideas.satx.disa.mil>. This Pool contains all Air Force Ideas that have been approved in the last 18 months. It also contains Ideas that were disapproved in the last 13 months. The Idea Pool could be very beneficial to the units as we can access it and check out ideas about particular aircraft systems. These ideas can be printed and utilized at the units, possibly saving money and we do not have to pay Air Force for this information. The Idea Pool has up to 4 search words you can type in to search the pool, i.e. C-130 engine, etc. It will search for all ideas related to each of the search areas, but always start with aircraft identifier.

Also, people considering submitting a suggestion could check this pool before they put in their suggestion to see if it is already under consideration and in use.

This IPDS computerized Idea system is for the use of all Title 5s and Title 10s, who want to submit a suggestion, whether they are Air Force or Air Guard. **The Air Guard Title 32s cannot submit a suggestion using this program. They will not get paid.** For the Air Guard Title 5s and 10s that want to submit an idea, they will have to get their unit communications people to open Ports 80 and 4322 (both ways) for it to work. The IP address is 207.133.116.108. This idea Program uses works using email.

For information regarding the Suggestion Program for the Montana National Guard, contact Robert Gregori at (406) 841-3131. There are different forms for Army and Air so please contact me before you complete any paperwork.

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program: Waivers of the Participation Requirement for Employees Retiring During an Agency Buyout Period

The FEHB law (5 U.S.C. 8905(b)) specifies the requirements that a retiring employee must meet to be eligible to continue his or her enrollment after retirement. The employee must have been enrolled in the FEHB Program for the 5 years of service immediately before retirement or, if less, for all service in which the employee was eligible for FEHB. The law allows the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to waive the 5-year requirement when, because of exceptional circumstances, it would be against equity and good conscience not to allow the retiring employee to continue coverage.

In April 1994, OPM established a procedure which enabled employees retiring with buyouts under the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-226), and

other similar legislation, to have pre-approved waivers of the 5-year participation requirement for continuing their FEHB coverage as retirees. OPM created this procedure in anticipation of a high volume of waiver requests during the period of downsizing covered by the legislation (March 30, 1994 through March 3, 1995).

Public Law 104-208, approved September 30, 1996, was similar to P.L. 103-226. This law authorized Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIPs) for all Executive branch agencies (other than those who have authority under other statutes) effective October 1, 1996 and ending December 30, 1997. Accordingly, Benefits Administration Letter (BAL) 96-208 dated December 4, 1996, granted pre-approved waivers for employees affected by this legislation.

UPDATED WAIVER POLICY

While these two Public Laws authorized Government-wide VSIP authority, more recently, Congress has been authorizing buyouts for individual agencies that are undergoing restructuring. Each agency's VSIP legislation specifies different beginning and ending dates. In view of this, OPM has updated their waiver policy to accommodate the needs of employees in those agencies that have, or will be receiving, individual buyout authority.

Under the amended waiver policy, OPM will grant waivers to employees who have been covered under the FEHB Program **continuously since October 1, 1996, or the beginning date of an agency's latest statutory buyout authority, whichever is later.** These employees must:

- Retire during the agency's statutory buyout period; **and**
- Receive a buyout under the agency's statutory buyout authority; **or**
- Take early optional retirement as a result of early-out authority in the agency; **or**
- Take a discontinued service retirement based on an involuntary separation due to RIF, directed reassignment, reclassification to a lower grade, or abolishment of position.

As in the past, since OPM has already established its waiver policy, employees who meet these requirements do not need to write a letter requesting a waiver.

EMPLOYEES WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR A PRE-APPROVED WAIVER

Some employees who retire during a buyout period will not be eligible for a pre-approved waiver. These include employees who retire on a regular optional retirement but do not qualify for a VSIP. Employees who do not qualify for a pre-approved waiver may request a waiver on a case-by-case basis by asking OPM to waive the participation requirement in their case. **While OPM may eventually grant waivers to some of these**

employees, they will consider each case on its own merits, based on the criteria that are applied to all other retiring employees. These employees should explain why they believe OPM should consider them for a waiver (e.g. why they are unable to meet the 5-year requirement or why meeting it would be harmful to them) and send their waiver requests to the following address:

Office of Personnel Management
Retirement and Insurance Service
Office of Retirement Programs
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415-3532

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have any further questions about this new waiver policy, please call TSG Robert Gregori at (406) 841-3131/DSN 747-3131.

RETIREMENT QUESTION

Is the minimum retirement age and time of service still 56/25?

Your minimum retirement age is still 56 (born between 1953 and 1964) however the years of service numbers are 10 and 30. If you have ten or more of creditable service, you could retire voluntarily anytime after 56 with 5% per year reduction for every year under 62 (5/12s per month). 30 years of service would mean you could retire at 56 with no reduction.

Is retirement pay based on my "high 3" or "high 5"?

High 3 is still the formula, haven't heard any recent legislation to change it (it was a proposal a couple of years ago and could be reintroduced as more FERS employees approach retirement).

Will the answers to 1 & 2 always remain the same, as far as my retirement goes, or is it possible that a new law or whatever will change the current standings?

My first line when I talk about retirement is "Everything I am telling you is subject to Congress". They can change anything if they want to. Watch them closely and contact your congressman/senator anytime there is a change you want or don't want.

ROLLBACK OF CSRS AND FERS WITHHOLDINGS RATES

P.L. 106-346, signed by the President on October 23, 2000, rolls back CSRS and FERS withholdings rates for all employees, other than Members of Congress, to those in effect before 1999. The new lower rates will be effective on the first day of the first pay period beginning on *January 14, 2001*.

EMPLOYEE WITHHOLDINGS

For your convenience, the following charts provide the CSRS and FERS withholding rates that will be effective on the first day of the first pay period beginning on or after *January 1, 2001*:

FULL CSRS	Withholding Rate (%)
“Regular” employees	7.0
Law enforcement officers, firefighters, Capitol police, Congressional employees, and nuclear materials couriers	7.5
Judges [<i>Bankruptcy, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Magistrates, and Court of Federal Claims</i>]	8.0
Members of Congress	8.5

FERS AND CSRS OFFSET	Withholding Rate (%)
“Regular” employees	0.8
Law enforcement officers, firefighters, Capitol police, Congressional employees, nuclear materials couriers, and FERS-covered Air Traffic Controllers	1.3
Members of Congress and CSRS offset-covered Judges [<i>Bankruptcy, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Magistrates, and Court of Federal Claims</i>]	1.8

AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS

P.L. 106-346 does not immediately reduce the agency contribution rate for CSRS-covered employees. Rather, the contribution rate for “regular” CSRS employees will remain 8.51 percent of basic pay through September 2002. Effective with the first day of the first pay period in October 2002, however, the CSRS agency contribution rates will be reduced to 0.5 percent above the employee withholding rates. Then, on the first day of the first pay period in January 2003, the CSRS agency contribution rate will revert to that in effect before 1999.

For your convenience, the following chart shows the CSRS agency contribution rates that are in effect currently, in October 2002, and in January 2003:

	CSRS Agency Contribution Rate (%)		
	Current	10/2002	1/2003
Regular employees	8.51	7.5	7.0
Law enforcement officers, firefighters, Capitol police, Congressional employees, and nuclear materials couriers	9.01	8.0	7.5
Members of Congress, Judges [Bankruptcy, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Magistrates, and Court of Federal Claims]	9.51	8.5	8.0

Did You Know a New Law That May Affect Your Retirement Benefits Has Been Passed?

On September 19, 2000, the President signed an important piece of legislation that may affect you. The legislation is the Federal Erroneous Retirement Coverage Correction Act (FERCCA), and it provides relief to employees who were in the wrong retirement plan for at least 3 years of service after December 31, 1986. If this is you, we need to hear from you. See the information below beginning with ***How Can FERCCA Help Me?***

If you have never been told that you were in the wrong retirement plan, you may be in the wrong plan and not know it. Despite agencies' extensive efforts to find and correct retirement coverage errors, there are still some employees in the wrong retirement plan. If this is you, we need to hear from you, too. The section ***How Do I Know if I'm in the Right Retirement Plan?*** Will help you figure out if you might be in the wrong retirement plan.

How Can FERCCA Help Me?

If you were in the wrong retirement plan for at least 3 years of service after December 31, 1986, FERCCA can help you in one or more of the following ways:

- You may have an opportunity to choose another retirement plan;
- You may be reimbursed for certain out-of-pocket expenses you paid as a result of a coverage error;
- You may benefit from certain changes in the rules about how some of your Government service counts toward retirement; and
- You may be able to make up contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan and get make-up earnings on those contributions as well.

What Do I Need to Do Now?

If you think FERCCA can help you, please contact the HRO.

What Will Happen Next?

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management has set up a plan to help everyone who is entitled to relief by FERCCA. Identifying all the employees that FERCCA can help is only the first step. The plan includes:

- **Identifying employees and adding their names to the database;**
- **Gathering information on those employees from personnel and payroll records and other sources;**
- **Verifying employees' options under FERCCA; and**
- **Helping employees who have a choice of retirement plans make informed decisions.**

OPM's goal is to ensure that everyone receives the same high level of customer service.

If you have a choice of retirement plans, you'll receive an in-depth comparison of your benefits under each option. This comparison will include how much you can expect to receive under each retirement plan, including Social Security and Thrift Savings Plan benefits. OPM will provide you with an opportunity for one-on-one personal assistance to help you weigh your options. This individual assistance will be available to anyone who has a choice under FERCCA.

OPM is working with agencies to implement this high level of service as quickly as possible. OPM expects counseling to begin June 1, 2001, or sooner.

Who Can I Contact for More Information?

The HRO has carefully reviewed each technician's OPF to determine if they have been placed in the correct retirement program but if you have any questions concerning your retirement plan or FERCCA, please contact:

TSG Robert Gregori or SSG Sharon Kaberline at (406) 841-3131/3130 or DSN 747-3131/3130

How Do I Know if I'm in the Right Retirement Plan?

Which retirement plan you belong in depends upon the type of appointment you have and your work history. The rules can be complicated. That's why some employees are in the wrong plan.

Most employees who started working for the Government after 1983 should be in FERS. Those who started working for the Government on a permanent basis before 1984 should be in CSRS unless they elected FERS or left Government employment for a while. When errors occur, they often involve situations where an employee has breaks in Government service or changes in appointments.

Below are some of the common errors, broken down by retirement plan. Find your retirement plan and see if you fit into any of the situations listed. (If you don't know your retirement plan, you can find it by looking in Block 30 on one of your Standard Form 50s, Notifications of Personnel Actions.) If you fit one of the situations listed, you may be in the wrong plan. Remember, there are exceptions to the general rules. You may be in the right retirement plan because you fall under one of the exceptions (like the one shown under CSRS Offset). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us. We can check to make sure that you are in the right retirement plan.

If your retirement plan is:	Then you may be in the wrong plan if you:
CSRS	Worked for the Government before 1984, but not on a permanent basis; or Left Federal employment for more than a year at any time after 1983.
CSRS or CSRS Offset	Have a temporary appointment limited to a year or less, a term appointment, or an emergency indefinite appointment; or Have no Federal civilian employment before 1984; or Do not have a career or career conditional appointment and you work on an intermittent basis. (See the work schedule block on your SF-50.)
CSRS Offset	Did not work for the Government for a total of 5 years before 1987. (Don't count your military service.) Exception: If you worked under CSRS, left the Government, and your agency placed you in CSRS Offset on your return, your CSRS Offset coverage is probably correct if you had 5 years of Government service when you left.)
FERS	Have a temporary appointment limited to a year or less; or Do not have a career or career conditional appointment and you work on an intermittent basis; or Have worked for the Government under a retirement plan continuously since December 31, 1983, unless you elected to transfer to FERS during the 1987 or 1998 FERS Open Seasons.

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

Rates of Return were updated on **December 8, 2000**.

The monthly C, F, and G Fund returns represent the actual total rates of return used in the monthly allocation of earnings to participant accounts. The returns are shown after deduction of accrued TSP administrative expenses. The C and F Fund returns also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees. The most current C, F, and G Fund rates of return are shown below. Percentages in () are negative. **Returns are updated after the monthly allocation of earnings, usually by the 7th business day of the month.**

	C Fund	F Fund	G Fund
November 2000	(7.87%)	1.65%	0.48%
Last 12 Months* (12/1999 - 11/2000)	(4.25%)	9.13%	6.48%

- **The C, F, and G Fund returns for the last twelve months assume, except for the crediting of earnings, unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month and assume earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.**

TSP Open Season continues until January 31, 2001. Changes made on the TSP-1 will only affect your contribution from your regular pay and NOT your existing balances. To change existing balances you must do an Interfund Transfer. Questions regarding the TSP can be directed to SSG Sharon Kaberline or TSG Robert Gregori at (406) 841-3131/3130. Air Guard technicians can contact TSG Lisa Smith at 2243.



Happy Winter!

SECTION VI – ACTIVE GUARD RESERVE

MSG GARY MORGAN
SGT TIMOTHY MCCOY



2001 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (WINTER RERUNS)

With the signing of the 2001 NDAA active duty personnel will see several changes in the near future, some of the programs to look for are:

- TRICARE Prime Remote for Families
- Elimination of Co-pays for Active Duty Family Members
- Catastrophic Cap Reduction
- Chiropractic Health Care for Active Duty
- Custodial Care Benefit
- Thrift Savings for Active Duty Personnel
- Reduction in out of pocket costs for housing expenses
- Targeted pay raises for E5s, E6s, and E7s in July 2001

While these items were approved, implementation time is not known yet. We will pass information on to you as it becomes available. For information on the medical items check out www.tricare.osd.mil.

FRAMES OF CHOICE PROGRAM (WINTER RERUNS)

For those of you who do not utilize the Frames of Choice program at Malmstrom AFB try this website out for glasses: <http://138.143.250.101/nostra>.

TRICARE FAMILY MEMBER DENTAL PROGRAM

Attached is a MILPER message detailing the upcoming changes to the TriCare Family Member Dental Program, there is also a similar AFPC message available at the MPF. I would recommend that all soldiers/airmen who utilize the dental program visit the United Concordia web-site at www.ucci.com.

CHANGE TO LEAVE/PASS POLICY

Attached is a MILPER message outlining the changes to leave and pass procedures. Readers Digest version is we no longer have 72/96-hour passes but 3/4 day passes. The message also outlines the restrictions involved when utilizing regular and special passes. Recommend that all soldiers read this message especially S1 personnel. Although this is an Army message the policy for the Air Force is similar and all airmen should be familiar with leave/pass policies.

BAH CERTIFICATION

We still seem to be experiencing a problem with individuals not completing a new DA 5960 when they change duty locations. When you change geographic duty locations you receive PCS orders whether or not you exercise your PCS is up to you but you must still complete the requirements of the PCS order to include completing a new DA 5960. Effective immediately USPFO will be following the regulation which requires them to stop your BAH if you fail to complete a new DA 5960 by the end of the month of your PCS move.

MEDICAL

Below is a message I received from TriCare concerning a program called mytricare.com.

Introducing the myTRICARE.com by PGBA web site.....

Palmetto Government Benefits Administrators (PGBA) processes claims for beneficiaries in all TRICARE regions, except Regions 6 and 11. PGBA serves approximately three million TRICARE beneficiaries in 46 states. In 1999, PGBA processed more than 25 million claims, administering over \$3.2 billion in benefits.

PGBA has now extended its lead in the claims processing industry by making a web site available to TRICARE beneficiaries and providers.

Any person who is on DEERS can become a member of the myTRICARE.com web site. The beneficiary can then take advantage of the comprehensive content and many functions of the PGBA site. The only TRICARE Explanation of Benefits (TEOB) and claims history beneficiaries will not have access to are those processed by the Contractor for Regions 6 and 11 (Washington, Oregon, Oklahoma, Arkansas, part of Louisiana and part of Texas).

Beneficiaries and providers often have questions about TRICARE benefits, eligibility and claim status. Prior to May 1, 2000, there were two methods of obtaining the information: calling TRICARE Services and speaking to a Claims Associate or writing and mailing correspondence to TRICARE Services. Now beneficiaries have another channel available to find the information they're seeking - myTRICARE.com by PGBA.

Visit the myTRICARE.com by PGBA Web site (<http://www.myTRICARE.com>) to find the following information:

- + Claims Status: Have questions regarding specific claims? If so, follow the status on myTRICARE claims. Look up all claims, claims for the last two years or claims for a specific date or date range. Information such as the claim number, date of service, date processed, total billed charges, and amount paid to beneficiary and provider, patient liability, deductible, cost share and co-payment is available. myTRICARE claims provides an online filing system for all your claim records.
- + DEERS Eligibility: Check eligibility status, program and region enrollment. Eligibility status is updated by DEERS on a daily basis.
- + Benefit Explanations: To access the online "Prime, Extra and Standard Features and Benefits booklet", simply visit the Benefits Explanation section.
- + Provider Directory: Curious about whether a favorite doctor is a TRICARE provider? Finding out is simple. Just log onto myTRICARE.com and enter a combination of the following information: provider's name, city, state, and zip code and/or specialty area. The Provider Directory will cross reference the information and present an answer within seconds. If that doesn't provide sufficient information, the option to view the entire TRICARE provider listing compiled by TMA is available.
- + Forms: Access and print Enrollment, Third Party Liability, Authorization to Disclose, Other Health Insurance and Beneficiary Claim Forms on the Web site.
- + Frequently Asked Questions: Need help navigating through the Web site or have questions about TRICARE coverage? If so, the FAQ section provides helpful information.
- + "Ask Customer Service": Still have questions that can't be resolved? There's no need to write a letter or pick up the phone. Visit "Ask Customer Service" and submit an E-mail to an I-Care Representative. This function is available seven days a week and guarantees a response within 24 hours. Beneficiaries are often pleasantly surprised by an E-mail response within four hours.
- + "Satisfied Customers": The following is one beneficiary's response to using myTRICARE.com. "Good Morning. I want to thank you for this marvelous way to communicate with your client. Absolutely first class! This truly lowered my blood pressure!"

Maintaining the privacy of beneficiary information is an absolute priority. Measures to protect the privacy include a corporate firewall around the Web site, a registration process that informs the beneficiary by mail service that he/she registered successfully and adherence to the Federal Privacy Act. Beneficiaries are given the option to grant

permission to family members to view his/her claim's information on the Web site. Most recently, another measure to protect privacy was implemented. Upon registration, beneficiaries will be mailed a key security code. Access to myTRICARE claims will be restricted until the code is entered.

Ready to enroll? If so, log onto www.myTRICARE.com and select the "Join Now" option. Follow the prompts to complete the registration process. You can be a myTRICARE.com member within 10 minutes. Membership provides you with your very own online TRICARE claims filing system that PGBA updates and maintains on your behalf.

Providers can use the Web site to access provider directories, print forms and file claims online using the TRIDDE system. Using this online filing tool expedites the claim cycle time significantly. Additional features will be made available for providers in late 2000.

PGBA is eager to make claims processing easier for both beneficiaries and providers. A Web Team is constantly working to enhance the Web site experience. So, please feel free to let us know your thoughts and ideas to make the Web site a more complete customer service environment.

Visit www.myTRICARE.com today!

MILPER MESSAGE NUMBER : 01-044
TAPC-PDO-IP
TRANSITION TO THE NEW TRICARE DENTAL PLAN (TDP)

REF A. MILPER MESSAGE 01-030

THIS MILPER MESSAGE WILL EXPIRE NLT NOV 02

1. THIS MESSAGE CLARIFIES REF A AND CANCELS MILPERS MEMO 01-001 BY PROVIDING ADDITIONAL PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE DURING THE 18 NOVEMBER 2000 THROUGH 31 JANUARY 2001 TRANSITION FROM THE TRICARE FAMILY MEMBER DENTAL PLAN (TFMDP), AND THE TRICARE SELECTIVE RESERVE DENTAL PROGRAM (TSRDP) TO THE TRICARE DENTAL PROGRAM (TDP). IT ALSO PROVIDES GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE EXPANDED BENEFITS UNDER THE TDP.

2. THE TRANSITION FROM TFMDP TO TDP WILL BE DONE IN THREE PHASES.

A. PHASE I – FROM 18 NOVEMBER 2000 THROUGH 8 DECEMBER 2000 – AS OF 18 NOVEMBER 2000, PERSONNEL SERVICE OFFICES CAN NO LONGER ENROLL NEW SPONSORS IN THE TFMDP USING DD FORMS 2494 OR 2494-1, OR ACCEPT ENROLLMENT FORMS FOR THE NEW TDP. NEW ENROLLMENTS IN THE TRICARE SELECTIVE RESERVE DENTAL PROGRAM

(TSRDP) WAS TERMINATED ON 17 NOVEMBER 2000. ANYONE DESIRING ENROLLMENT IN TFMDP ARE ENCOURAGED TO ENROLL IN TDP. THE SHORTER MINIMUM ENROLLMENT PERIOD OF TWELVE MONTHS INSTEAD OF TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS AND THE REDUCED PREMIUM DEDUCTIONS AS WELL AS THE 30-60 DAY PROCESSING TIME REQUIRED TO AFFECT ENROLLMENT IN TFMDP SHOULD BE STRESSED. INITIAL ENROLLMENTS IN THE NEW TPD MUST BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE ADDRESS ON THE FORM WITH THE FIRST MONTH'S PREMIUM. DO NOT USE THE TDP ENROLLMENT FORM TO UPDATE DEPENDENT INFORMATION OR CHANGE AN ADDRESS UNDER THE TFMDP. PERSONNEL SERVICE OFFICES CAN CONTINUE TO WORK DENTAL ERROR RESOLUTION CASES USING DEERS/RAPIDS UPDATES AND FIELD FINANCE OFFICES UNTIL CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON 8 DECEMBER. DFAS INDIANAPOLIS HAS PROVIDED PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE TO ASSIST THEIR FINANCE OFFICES WITH THESE CASES.

B. PHASE II – FROM 9 DECEMBER 2000 THROUGH 31 JANUARY 2001 – EFFECTIVE 9 DECEMBER 2000, THE ERROR RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR TFMDP MUST BE HANDLED BY THE DENTAL PROJECT OFFICE'S POINTS OF CONTACT. REQUESTS FOR ACTIVE DUTY ERROR RESOLUTION CAN BE REPORTED THROUGH THE WEBSITE AT PERSCOMND04.ARMY.MIL. ALTHOUGH DISCOURAGED, ENROLLMENT IN THE TFMDP CAN BE DONE DURING PHASES I AND II. IT IS A MANUAL PROCESS THAT MUST BE DONE BY THE DENTAL PROJECT OFFICE AT PERSCOM. THIS PROCESS TAKES 30-60 DAYS. THE DD FORM 2494/2494-1 MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY THE SPONSOR AND A WITNESS, AND THEN FAXED TO PERSCOM, ATTN: ELBERT JACKSON (DSN 221-4532 OR COMMERCIAL (703) 325-4532) BY THE SPONSOR'S PERSONNEL OFFICE. THE COVER SHEET FOR THE DD FORM 2494/2494-1 MUST INDICATE (1) WHETHER IT IS A NEW ENROLLMENT OR AN ENROLLMENT CHANGE, (2) THE NAME AND SSN OF SPONSOR AS VERIFIED THROUGH THE FIELD PERSONNEL SYSTEM, (3) THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF ELIGIBLE DEPENDENTS AS VERIFIED THROUGH DEERS/RAPIDS, AND (4) THE POC, LOCATION, PHONE, AND E-MAIL ADDRESS OF THE PERSONNEL SERVICE OFFICE. THE ENROLLMENT FORM WILL NOT BE PROCESSED IF IMPROPERLY COMPLETED OR FAXED FROM OTHER THAN A PERSONNEL SERVICE OFFICE.

C. PHASE III – 1 FEBRUARY 2001 AND CONTINUING –BEGINNING 1 FEBRUARY 2001, THE TDP REPLACES BOTH THE TFMDP AND THE TSRDP. UNITED CONCORDIA COMPANIES, INCORPORATED (UCCI), AS THE DENTAL CONTRACTOR, WILL TAKE OVER ADMINISTRATION OF THE TDP. ALL INDIVIDUALS ENROLLED IN TFMDP AND THE TSRDP WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY CONVERTED TO TDP WITHOUT SUBMITTING NEW ENROLLMENT FORMS. FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE SOLDIERS THAT WISH TO ENROLL IN TDP, ENROLLMENT FORMS WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE PERSONNEL SERVICE OFFICES, FAMILY SERVICE CENTERS, HEALTH BENEFITS ADVISORS AND DENTAL TREATMENT FACILITIES. TDP IS STILL A PRE-PAID INSURANCE PROGRAM, SO ENROLLMENT APPLICATIONS ALONG WITH THE FIRST MONTH'S PREMIUM PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED AT UCCI BY THE 20TH DAY OF THE MONTH FOR COVERAGE TO BEGIN ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEXT MONTH. DUE TO PROCESSING REQUIREMENTS, APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE 20TH DAY OF THE MONTH MAY RESULT IN COVERAGE NOT BECOMING EFFECTIVE UNTIL THE FIRST DAY OF THE SECOND MONTH. ANY QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO UCCI FOR RESOLUTION. FOR GENERAL INFORMATION CALL 1-800-866-8499, FOR ENROLLMENT INFORMATION CALL 1-888-622-2256 OR VISIT THEIR WEB SITE AT WWW.UCCI.COM. THIS WEB SITE CONTAINS DETAILED INFORMATION AND A BENEFITS BOOKLET ON THE NEW TDP. UCCI HAS SENT BENEFIT BOOKLETS TO ALL SPONSORS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN THE DENTAL PLAN, TO EXPLAIN THE EXPANDED BENEFITS.

3. SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE DENTAL PROGRAM ARE LISTED BELOW:

A. TDP COVERAGE WILL INCLUDE ACTIVE DUTY FAMILY MEMBERS, SELECTIVE

RESERVES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS AND INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVES MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

B. PREMIUM DEDUCTIONS ARE REDUCED

C. SPONSORS IN PAYGRADE E1-E4 PAY 30% FOR COVERED ENDODONTICS, PERIODONTICS AND ORAL SURGERY PROCEDURES INSTEAD OF 40%

D. ANNUAL DENTAL MAXIMUM WILL BE INCREASED TO \$1200

E. ORTHODONIC CARE IS NOW OFFERED UNTIL AGE 21 OR IN SOME CASES AGE 23.

F. THE LIFETIME MAXIMUM FOR ORTHODONIC CARE IS NOW \$1500

G. MINIMUM ENROLLMENT PERIOD IS 12 MONTHS VICE 24 MONTHS

4. QUESTIONS CONCERNING NATIONAL GUARD PERSONNEL SHOULD BE REFERRED TO MAJOR GALLEGOS VIA E-MAIL AT STEVE.GALLEGOS@NGB.ARMY.MIL OR TELEPHONE (703) 607-9532/DSN 327-9532.

5. QUESTIONS CONCERNING RESERVE PERSONNEL SHOULD BE REFERRED TO MAJOR MAYNARD VIA E-MAIL AT MELODY.MAYNARD@OCAR.ARMY.PENTAGON.MIL OR TELEPHONE (703) 601-3530.

6. PLEASE DISSEMINATE THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR PERSONNEL SERVICE OFFICES AND OTHERS YOU DEEM APPROPRIATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Use this URL to link to this document

<http://PERSCOMND04.ARMY.MIL/MILPERmsgs.nsf/All+Documents/01-044?OpenDocument>

MILPER MESSAGE NUMBER: 01-055
TAPC-PDO
LEAVES AND PASSES PROCEDURES

A. CDR PERSCOM MILPER MESSAGE 97-170, DTG 171533Z SEP 97, SUBJECT AS ABOVE IS RESCINDED.

B. AR 600-8-10 (LEAVES AND PASSES).

1. EXPIRATION: THIS MESSAGE WILL EXPIRE NLT DEC 02. PRIOR TO THE EXPIRATION DATE, THESE PROCEDURES WILL APPEAR IN THE APPROPRIATE ARMY REGULATION/PAMPHLET.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO CLARIFY PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO REGULAR AND SPECIAL PASSES, AND TO CHANGE THE LAST SENTENCE IN

PARAGRAPH 5-27, SUBPARAGRAPH F (1), OF REFERENCE B TO READ AS FOLLOWS. COMMANDERS AT TDY LOCATION MAY AUTHORIZE REGULAR PASSES. (SEE JFTR, CHAPTER 4, FOR TRAVEL ENTITLEMENTS).

3. REGULAR AND SPECIAL PASSES. THE STANDARD FOR CALCULATING THE PERIOD OF THE PASS IS TO COUNT CALENDAR DAYS, NOT ON THE NUMBER OF HOURS TO BE TAKEN. THE RESTRICTION IN PARAGRAPH 5-27E AND 5-29E PERTAINING TO THE NUMBER OF HOURS FOR PASSES NO LONGER APPLIES.

4. NON-DUTY PERIODS OF ABSENCE, OTHER THAN THE ESTABLISHED/NORMAL DUTY HOURS, ARE CONSIDERED AS A PASS PERIOD (SEE TABLE 5-1 OF REFERENCE B).

A. REGULAR PASS. A REGULAR PASS SHALL NORMALLY BE FROM THE END OF NORMAL DUTY HOURS ON ONE DAY TO THE BEGINNING OF WORKING HOURS THE NEXT DUTY DAY.

(1) ON WEEKENDS, A 3-DAY REGULAR PASS PERIOD, WHICH INCLUDES A NATIONAL HOLIDAY, BEGINS AT THE END OF NORMAL DUTY DAY ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, AND TERMINATES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NORMAL DUTY DAY ON THE 4TH DAY (TUESDAY).

(2) A REGULAR PASS PERIOD SHALL NOT EXCEED 3 DAYS IN LENGTH, EXCEPT WHEN PUBLIC HOLIDAY WEEKENDS OR PUBLIC HOLIDAY SPECIFICALLY EXTENDED BY THE PRESIDENT.

(3) A REGULAR PASS SHALL NOT BE USED IN SUCCESSION OR BACK-TO-BACK WITHOUT A DUTY DAY IN BETWEEN THE ABSENCES. FOR EXAMPLE, A 3-DAY REGULAR PASS IN CONJUNCTION WITH A PUBLIC HOLIDAY. A SOLDIER MAY DEPART ON A 3-DAY PASS ON FRIDAY EVENING AFTER THE DUTY DAY AND MUST RETURN FOR THE NORMAL DUTY DAY TUESDAY MORNING.

B. SPECIAL PASSES AND LEAVE MAY NOT BE COMBINED IN CONTINUOUS ABSENCE FROM THE DUTY STATION, NOR MAY THEY BE EFFECTIVE IN SUCCESSION OR SERIES THROUGH COMMENCEMENT OF ONE IMMEDIATELY UPON RETURN TO DUTY FROM THE OTHER. A SPECIAL PASS MUST INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE DUTY DAY BETWEEN THE PASS AND LEAVE.

(1) A 3-DAY SPECIAL PASS PERIOD MUST INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE DUTY DAY. NORMALLY BEGINS AT THE END OF NORMAL DUTY DAY ON A GIVEN DAY AND ENDS WITH THE START OF NORMAL DUTY ON THE 4TH DAY. NORMALLY THIS PERIOD IS TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, DEPENDING ON UNIT DUTY REQUIREMENTS. (EXAMPLE, A SOLDIER MAY DEPART AT THE END OF THE DUTY DAY ON MONDAY EVENING, AND MUST RETURN AT THE START OF NORMAL DUTY DAY ON FRIDAY).

(2) A 4-DAY SPECIAL PASS PERIOD MUST INCLUDE AT LEAST TWO CONSECUTIVE NON-DUTY DAYS. FOR EXAMPLE, A SOLDIER MAY DEPART ON A 4-DAY PASS ON FRIDAY EVENING AFTER DUTY DAY AND MUST RETURN AT THE START OF NORMAL DUTY DAY ON WEDNESDAY.

(3) A SPECIAL PASS MAY NOT BE REPEAT "MAY NOT BE" COMBINED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH A REGULAR PASS, ANOTHER SPECIAL PASS, OR WITH LEAVE.

C. COMMANDERS MAY FURTHER RESTRICT SPECIAL PASSES AS NECESSARY TO SATISFY LOCAL COMMAND REQUIREMENTS (I.E. MAINTAIN READINESS, ORDER OR TO

PROTECT SOLDIER'S WELFARE).

5. THE ELIMINATION OF THE SIGN IN AND OUT REQUIREMENTS FOR SOLDIERS DEPARTING AND RETURNING FROM LEAVE, CITED IN THE SUMMARY OF CHANGES, REFERENCE B ABOVE, IS OPTIONAL AND WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE LEAVE APPROVING AUTHORITY.

6. REQUEST WIDEST DISSEMINATION OF THIS MESSAGE TO ALL LEAVE APPROVING AUTHORITIES.

7. POC IS MRS. MCCLELLAND, DSN 221-9005 OR COMMERCIAL (703) 325-9005. E-MAIL ADDRESS IS MCCLELLB@HOFFMAN.ARMY.MIL. FAX NUMBER IS DSN 221-4532 OR COMMERCIAL (703) 325-4532.

Use this URL to link to this document

<http://PERSCOMND04.ARMY.MIL/MILPERmsgs.nsf/All+Documents/01-055?OpenDocument>

FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL:

//signed//
JAMES D. HOGAN
LTC, AR, MTARNG
Human Resources Office

Distribution:
ARNG/ANG Intranet
HRO ON-LINE